

1568 / 1015 (5)

THE DESERTER.



BY others blest with genius' rays
Let noble acts be told,
While I, content with humbler praise,
A simple tale unfold.

The Spaniard left the hostile plain,
To seek his native land,
Beneath the sails that swept the main,
Cabeysa join'd the band :

DUNBAR :

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WHOLESALE AND RETAIL.

(2)

Who, as he met his country's foes:

Within the field of fame,
Above his rank obscure arose,
And grac'd his humble name.

Yet not the early wreath of fame
With haughtiness was twin'd :
Nor pride nor fickleness could claim
The empire of his mind.

The lowly hut, beneath whose roof
He sigh'd a sad adieu,
Receiv'd him (time and distance-proof)
To love and Mary true.

This hamlet fair, by fortune scorn'd,
Seem'd nature's fav'rite child,
With hand profuse by her adorn'd
—The flow'ret of the wild !

Her neat but homely garment press'd
The pure, the feeling heart,
Oft sought in vain behind the vest
Of decorated art,

“ If sharing all thy cares, (she said)
“ Has pal'd my beauty's rose,
“ Ah know! for thee the heart that bled,
“ With all its passion glows.

“ Blest moments to my wish that gives
“ The long, long absent youth !
“ He lives — th' endear'd Cabeyla lives,
“ And love confirms the truth.

“ When thy brave comrades fell around,
“ What pow’r’s benignant care,
“ Secur’d thee from the fatal wound,
“ And Mary from despair ?

“ Oft in the troubling dream of night
“ I saw the rushing spear,
“ Nor did the morn’s awak’ning light
“ Dispel the ling’ring fear.”

“ Thy tender fears (the youth replied)
“ Ah ! give them to the air !
“ To happiness we’re now allied,
“ And pleasure be our care.

“ Let us pursue the joy begun,
“ Nor lose by dull delay :
“ Say, Mary, shall to morrow’s sun
“ Illume our nuptial day !”

With look declin’d he blush’d consent--
Reserve that takes alarm,
And love and joy their influence lent
To rise meek beauty’s charm.

The guests, to hail the wedded pair,
Beneath their roof repair’d,
With them the little feast to share
Their scanty purse prepar’d.

Tho’ no delicious wines were pour’d,
Mirth took his destin’d place,
The hand-maid Neatness spread the board,
And sage Content said grace.

Scarce thro' one hasty week had love
 His grateful blessings shed,
 When bliss (as flies the frighted dove,)
 Their humble mansion fled :

'Twas at Bellona's voice it flew,
 That call'd to war's alarms ;
 Had the youth rise to valour true,
 And break from Mary's arms.

But she still strain'd him to her heart,
 To lengthen the adieu :

" Ah what she said, shou'd'st thou depart,
 " Shall I and sorrow do ?

" Say, valiant youth, when thou'rt away

" Who'll raise my drooping head ?

" How shall I chace the fears that say

" Thy lov'd Cabeyla's dead ?

" With thine my fate I now involve,

" Intent by course to steer,

" No words shall shake my firm resolve,

" Not ev'n that trickling tear :"

" Fram'd for each scene of soft delight,

" (He said) thy gentie form,

" As shrinks the lily at the blight,

" Will droop beneath the storm :

" Blest in thy presence ! ev'ry pain

" She added brings its charm,

" And love, tho' falls the beating rain,

" Will keep this bosom warm."

Her zeal (the supplement of strength)
 Upheld her many a day,
 But nature's pow'rs subdu'd at length,
 On sickness' couch she lay.

Three painful days unseen she lay
 Of him she held so dear :
 " Ah does he thus my love repay ?"
 She said—and dropt a tear.

" Cabeyfa, at a league's remove,
 " Dwells on the tent spread hill :
 " Ah, wherefore did he vow true love;
 " And not that vow fulfil ?"

Yet not deficiency of truth
 Forbad to yield relief,
 Stern pow'r with-held the tender youth,
 And duty to his chief :

Who, wisely counsel'd, drew a line,
 To check the hand of stealth,
 That ravag'd wide th' encircling vine,
 The humble peasant's wealth.

To pass the line, it was ordain'd,
 Whoever should presume,
 Sould a Defenter be arraign'd,
 And meet the coward's doom.

This law by equity approv'd,
 And to the peasant dear,
 Soon to the brave Cabeyfa prov'd
 Destructively severe.

Now Mary's image haunts his soul,
In woe's dark tints array'd.

While to his breast compassion stole,
And all her claims display'd.

" For me her native home (he said),

" For me each weeping friend,

" For me a father's arms she fled—

" And shall not love attend ?

" Say, for a chosen lover's sake,

" What more could woman do ?

" And now that health and peace forsake,

" Shall I forsake her too ?

" Now stretch'd upon the naked ground,

" Oppress'd with pain and fear,

" She casts a languid eye around,

" Nor sees Cabeyia near :

" Now, now she weeps at my delay;

" And shall neglect be mine ?

" Submit, ye fears, to pity's sway !

He spoke—and cross'd the line.

Soon at his sight the fair return'd

Each captivating grace ;

On her pale cheek the rose rebloom'd,

And smiles illum'd her face.

Yet to that cheek return'd in vain

Bright health's vermilion dye,

For bitter tears that cheek shall stain,

And dim her brilliant eye.

The youth returning thro' the gloom,
 At midnight's secret hour
 Was seiz'd—and to dishonour's tomb
 Doom'd by the martial pow'r.

He meet his fate at wake of day
 (Love's victim) he was led,
 No weakness did his cheek betray,
 While to the chief he said :

" If in the battle death I've dar'd,
 " In all its horror dress'd,
 " Think not this scene by thee prepar'd,
 " Sheds terror on my breast :

" Yet at Maria's helpless fate,
 " My fortitude impairs,
 " Unman'd I sink beneath the weight
 " Of her oppressive cares :

" Ah ! when her grief-torn heart shall bleed
 " Some little solace grant,
 " Oh guard her in the hour of need
 " From the rude hand of want."

Now kneeling on the fatal spot,
 He twin'd the dark'ning band :
 The twelve who drew th' unwelcome lot,
 Reluctant took their stand.

Now the murm'ring throng grew dumb,
 Was silence all—save where,
 Intervals, the mournful drum
 Laid horror on the ear.

Now, with their death fraught tubes uprear'd
 The destin'd twelve were seen—
 And now th' explosion dire was heard
 That clos'd Cabeyfa's scene.

Another scene remain'd behind

For Mary to supply—

She comes! mark how her tortur'd mind
 Speaks thro' th' expressive eye:

“Forbear—will you in blood (she said)

“Your cruel hands imbrue?

“On me, on me your vengeance shed,

“To me alone its due:

“Relent—and to these arms again

“The valiant youth restore.

“I rave—already on the plain

“He welters in his gore.”

Advancing now she pierc'd the croud,

And reach'd the fatal place,

Where, lying from the corse the shroud

No semblance could she trace.

“Is this—oh blasting view! (she cried)

“The youth who lov'd too well!

“His love for me the law defied

“And for that love he fell.

“When will the grave this form receive

“The grave to which he's fled?

“There, only there I'll cease to grieve

She spoke——And join'd the dead

FINIS. 17



